

In God's Hands

Rey Pineda fought with his soul to be ordained a priest, but as one of the "DREAMERS" under the threat of being deported to México, his home country, his mission in United States is in danger.

Rey Pineda's father had no intentions of leaving his life in Mexico to move to the United States. "He wanted to continue living in the village of Guerrero, where he grew up," recalls Pineda. But a car accident that had his mother on the verge of death forced the family to seek medical options in the north. "To this day, half of my mother's cranial bone is missing," assures the today Catholic priest, 29 years old, who crossed the border with his family with the help of coyotes when he was 2 years old.

After "a miraculous recovery," his mother had three more children in California. In 1996, the family moved to Atlanta, GA where Pineda listened to God's call. Although he had no papers, he insisted on going to the seminary. "There were talks about the DREAM Act, and the bishop in charge at that time decided to support me. The summer prior to my ordination as a deacon, DACA was announced." By becoming a recipient of the policy Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA), under the Obama Administration, Pineda received his work permit and graduated in 2013.

Now he and roughly 800,000 of so-called DREAMERS are at risk of being deported after the Trump Administration announced the end of DACA in September. "As many "DREAMERS," Father Pineda is a blessing, not a burden to our society," says Archbishop Wilton D. Gregory of the Archdiocese of Atlanta. At the same time, Fr. Rey asks President Trump to be "compassionate" and make "the right choice" with the "DREAMERS," so they can continue to contribute to this country. "I can do my work anywhere in the world," he admits, "but I feel that God has called me to serve here."

"As a man of faith, I can tell you that people wish for good and the only thing we need is to continue showing who we are - their neighbors, their students, their priests," said the parochial vicar for The Cathedral of Christ the King in Atlanta. (2016)

By Mayra Mangal

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